

T-P

3, AUGUST 5, 1969

SECTION THREE—PAGE THREE

Mayor Schiro Confirms Dismissal of Negro Aide

Says P. M. Baptiste Took Unauthorized Action

Mayor Victor H. Schiro Monday confirmed reports that he has dismissed Philip M. Baptiste, who was the only Negro aide attached to his office.

"I requested Mr. Baptiste's resignation on Friday," Schiro said. "When he refused to submit it, I informed him this morning that he was dismissed."

"Mr. Baptiste was dismissed as a result of his appearance as a member of the mayor's staff at a political function honoring a candidate for district attorney. At that function Mr. Baptiste presented the city's certificate of merit to the candidate."

"Mr. Baptiste took this action without my knowledge and approval. By so doing the impression was created that I had injected myself into the district attorney's race."

"This was not the first time that Mr. Baptiste had demonstrated extremely poor judgment."

The candidate to whom Baptiste presented the certificate was Harry Connick, who is running against District Attorney Jim Garrison.

Asked if there were any racial implications connected with Baptiste's dismissal, Schiro replied "absolutely not."

"If any member of my staff had done this I would have taken the same action," the mayor added.

Schiro said that he hopes to

make an appointment in a few days to fill the vacancy created by Baptiste's dismissal. Asked if a Negro would be appointed, Schiro replied that prior to Baptiste's appointment on May 5, 1968, several other Negroes had applied for the job and that they will be given every consideration.

"It is intolerable for any one to present a mayor's certificate of merit, which is for civic purposes, to a political official without the approval of the mayor," Schiro added.

Baptiste, who was at City Hall Monday morning clearing

personal effects out of his desk, declined comment on his dismissal but added, "I will have a statement in a day or so."